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HOUSEKEEPERS CHAT. Friday, August 25, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Canning Tomatoes." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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What's the easiest vegetable to can at home? Tomatoes. What's one of the most useful vegetables to have on the pantry shelves? Tomatoes. What's the vegetable that ranks as high as citrus fruit in vitamin content? Again, tomatoes. Altogether, tomatoes are a food bargain and if you have any extras in your garden, you won't go wrong by putting up a good supply for winter.

Of course, you know that many farm families in recent years have been adopting a live-at-home program. One of the features of such a program is carefully planned food budgets and food preservation budgets. These budgets show just how many quarts and pounds of each kind of food a family needs to raise and put up for the winter months in order to make sure of a well-balanced diet the year around. The idea behind these budgets isn't just to provide enough food to keep people from being hungry. It is far more than that. It's to provide the kinds and quantities of food for good nutrition. That's where modern food budgets are a long way ahead of the plans our grandmothers used to make for stocking up the cellar and the attic with food supplies for winter. Oftentimes our grandmothers did the right thing by instinct. But they simply didn't have a background of scientific facts on nutrition to guide them as we have today.

Well, one of the big items on your home canning budget will be that useful and economical food--tomatoes. This is the height of the tomato season in many gardens. Tomatoes are near the head of the list in vitamin values so they rank high among the protective foods. Every food budget calls for tomatoes, regardless of how much money there is to spend. And canned tomatoes are of special importance in the low-cost diet and in relief rations. Many of the community canneries now working to conserve all the food possible for relief next winter, are putting up more tomatoes than any other one food.

How many canned tomatoes ought to be planned on your food budget? That depends on what part of the country you live in and how long your fresh tomatoes will last in the garden. If fresh tomatoes are out of season--let's say four months of the year--and if you serve canned tomatoes in some form about three times a week, this would mean providing about a pint of canned tomatoes each week for each member of the family. That means about 16 to 20 quarts per person for the eight winter months. This is a generous allowance, but why not be generous in canning a food so important to good nutrition?

Now about canning methods. What's the first important step? To get good, firm, ripe tomatoes. The quality of the fresh tomatoes has a great deal to do with the quality of the canned tomatoes--more than lots of people seem to think.

Now, after you have selected good, firm, ripe tomatoes, scald them, plunge them for a second into cold water and peel them. While you are peeling, save the juice that drips down and use it to fill up the jars.

Another question. Should you use the hot pack or the cold pack for tomatoes? The canning specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics favor the hot-pack method in canning tomatoes as in canning almost anything else. When you heat the tomatoes to boiling and pack them hot into the containers before processing, you save in many ways. For one thing, the heat shrinks the tomatoes and drives out the air. That means that you can get more tomatoes into each container than when you pack them perfectly raw and cold. If you are using tin cans, you seal the cans right up, and cut out the step called "the exhaust." Also when you put the hot-packed containers into the hot canner, they do not cool it down. Very soon the water bath is boiling and you can begin to count time for the processing period.

Do you always process tomatoes in the water bath? There's another question for the specialists. They say, "Yes, always." The temperature in the pressure cooker is too high for tomatoes. It overcooks them and spoils the flavor. Tomatoes are acid and juicy. Therefore they will sterilize at the temperature of boiling water just as fruits will.

How long do you process hot-packed tomatoes in the boiling water bath? Just five minutes, whether the containers are glass jars or tin cans. With the cold pack, it's quite another story. With glass jars of cold-packed tomatoes, in order to be safe, we've found it necessary to allow 45 minutes, with the tin cans 35 minutes. So you see how the hot-pack cuts down the time of processing tomatoes.

If you have any further questions about canning tomatoes or any other food this year, write to the Bureau of Home Economics. The specialists there are ready to give every help they can on home food conservation. And by the way, if you want a canning budget to suit your region, write to your state college. Many states have these made up to help the thrifty home canner.

For our Friday night supper, let's have a vegetable plate meal straight from the garden. Let's have green peppers stuffed with sweet corn; let's have baked sweet or white potatoes; let's have broiled tomatoes on toast; and for dessert, let's have peach short cake.

Monday: "Puddings and Desserts from Fresh Fruits."